

While *Shop* comes daily 'dight in 'renaissance,'
'Elizabethan,' and 'Louis Quatorze.'
Club-house stands forth in bold Italian guise
Of Venice or of Rome; and *Moument*
In three presentments comes, the brothers two
Doric and Tuscan proudly leading in
Their tall Corinthian sister; while the rest
Are maskers all, who hide their poverty
'Neath plaster visors. Many, it is true,
Are cloth'd in costumes handsomely devis'd
And admirably suited; but—once more
To say 'tis *Architectural display*—
Not *Architecture's self*."

The editor of the *Plymouth Times*, in reporting this address (which he does at some length), seems to consider a lecture on architecture, unless set forth in poetic language, a dull affair of "bare walls and surfaces of stone and mortar"—unlikely to interest or edify. This is a common mistake; and we must take leave to say, without any desire to depreciate Mr. Wightwick's praiseworthy endeavours to make the subject popular, that architecture has a stirring history, which, recounted in simplest language, will ever be found to engage attention; and that architecture has a poetry of its own, quite independent of measure. We have ourselves often rehearsed its story in simplest language to a miscellaneous audience, and, without pretence to eloquence, have ever found it sufficient to fix a crowd to their seats, and make listeners of all.

PROJECTIONS BEFORE THE LINE OF FRONTS.

METROPOLITAN BUILDINGS ACT.

To save our metropolitan readers the expense of useless applications to the official referees, it is desirable they should know, that in the case "*G. Godwin and Hervey*," the particulars of which we gave a short time ago,* the Commissioners of Woods have concurred with the registrar in repudiating the award of the referees and in branding the Act with one more absurdity than really belongs to it. The commissioners have, in fact, decided (as remarked by Mr. Godwin, in reply to the registrar's objections to fix the seal), that "though the referees have power to prevent an owner from putting out a balcony, or verandah, or other projection, beyond the general line of fronts, not being part of an external wall, if it obstruct the light and air of his neighbour,—although they are bound to prevent the construction of a bow or any other projection beyond the general line of fronts, which does form part of an external wall (except certain specified architectural decorations), even if innoxious and assented to by the adjoining owners, nay, may even prevent its construction within the line of fronts, if it 'obstruct the light and air, or be otherwise injurious to the owners or occupiers of the buildings adjoining thereto.'"

Yet, that they have not power to prevent that owner from building the external wall of his house forward to any extent, limited only by the extent of his ground, though it obstruct the light and air, and be not simply injurious to, but utterly destructive of, the adjoining property."

Some awards in somewhat similar cases, sealed by the registrar before the occurrence of the case before us, are in course of repudiation.

In the matter of "*Hill and Browne*," for example one of the instances quoted by Mr. Godwin in proof of his statement that the competence of the referees to determine the line of fronts and prevent the erection of a building before that line, had been admitted by the registrar on previous occasions, the referees had ordered Mr. Hill to take down the front of one of three houses, and to rebuild it in a line with certain adjoining houses. Their award not having been complied with, Mr. Browne brought the matter again before them, and a few days ago they reported as follows:—"Whereas since the making of the said award the Commissioners of Works and Buildings have, on a question involving considerations similar to those of the present case, determined that the terms of the Metropolitan Buildings Act do not warrant the official referees in making an award, to the effect that it is contrary to the said Act to build certain houses

projecting beyond the general line of fronts,—now we, the undersigned two of the said official referees, having regard to all the circumstances of the case, make no further direction thereon."

THE SEWERS, THE THAMES, AND PUBLIC HEALTH.

SIR,—With a fairness which is a characteristic of *THE BUILDER*, you have published a letter from Mr. Morewood to the lord mayor against the flushing of sewers into the Thames. Permit me to ask: What else could have been done? Into what other receptacle of filth than the Thames could the 90,000 tons of night soil have been discharged in the same period? Mr. Morewood dwells on the evil which might happen from fouling the river. Is he aware of the good that positively has been done? Does he know that, while this flushing has been going on, the weekly mortality returns have been shewing a constant and striking improvement in the health of the metropolis? Is he aware that when the flushing began there had been, in ten weeks, 5,900 deaths in London above the ordinary number, and that now, with the 90,000 tons of night soil added to the ordinary filth of the Thames, the deaths in London are below the ordinary numbers? I do not mean to say, though I by no means deny, that the improved health of London is owing exclusively to the cleansing of drains and cesspools; but this I do say, that if Mr. Morewood had wished to make out a good case against flushing sewers into the Thames he could not have hit on a worse time for his purpose. Nor would I recommend that the Thames should be made the perpetual drain for the whole of London, provided some better drain can be found. It would be pleasant to see the Thames as clear at London-bridge as it is at Henley. Our great grandchildren may, I hope, see it; but in our days the complete purification of the Thames will not be effected. The cases of the Mendicity Society, &c., to which Mr. Morewood alludes, shew the absolute necessity of cleansing cesspools and drains. If he could find a single case of illness produced by the extra fouling of the Thames, it could be met with hundreds of cases of illness produced by foul cesspools and drains within a mile of its banks. I am informed that the daily amount of filth, which the flushing sends into the river, amounts only to one ten-thousandth part of the water into which it is discharged. If then, Mr. Morewood has frightened the lord mayor, I hope that his lordship will at once institute a searching inquiry as to the effect on a tumbler of water of the addition to it of one ten-thousandth particle of discolouring matter.

But though Mr. Morewood may (of course unintentionally) have exaggerated the evil of the present flushing, he has done good service in stirring the question.

How are we to get rid of our sullage? This is a question of vast importance. The Metropolitan Sewage Manure Company, which is, I believe, still in existence, and the Great London Drainage Company, which never had, so far as I can ascertain, any existence, except upon paper, have attempted to answer this question. Of the existing Company I will not speak, because I know nothing—and they probably know no more—of what they are to do. Of the Great London Drainage Company, I know thus much—that they proposed to appropriate for themselves all the sullage of London; to lay out 950,000*l.* on making it valuable to their shareholders; and, of course, to pay those shareholders a dividend on the capital. Now, I think that I may safely assume that a less dividend than 7*l.* per cent. would not be sufficient to recompense the shareholders for risking 950,000*l.* In order to pay that dividend, the company must have realised 68,500*l.* a-year clear profit out of the sullage of the metropolis. They must have shewn that an outlay of 950,000*l.* would enable them to clear 68,000*l.* a-year from London sewers. If the company could do that, why could not any other body? Why could not a body of commissioners, or trustees, or guardians, or directors do the same? Is there any magic in the word "company?" Far be it from me to assert that the Great London Drainage Company could ever pay 7*l.*, or even 7*s.* per cent. dividend; but, taking them on their own

grounds, I should like to know from the Lord Mayor, or any other authority, why the ratepayers should give to that or any other company, property worth 68,500*l.* a year? If 7*l.* per cent. dividend could be realised by an outlay of 950,000*l.*, why should not the ratepayers have the benefit of it? They could raise the 950,000*l.*, if that would do the work, on the security of the rates, at 4*l.* 10*s.* per cent. interest, and so clear more than 25,000*l.* a year for themselves. If the calculations of the Great London Drainage Company were correct—and unless they were correct the Company was a bubble—their scheme was a cool design to plunder the public of a very valuable property without giving a farthing for it!

But to return from this digression. Mr. Morewood considers it to be, in his case, "a duty to the public" to make his appeal to the Lord Mayor. Will he point out any practicable mode of getting rid of night soil for the next six months without flushing? If so, I doubt not that the Sanitary Commissioners, the Sewers Commissioners, the Lord Mayor, the ratepayers, and the rest of the two millions who are daily increasing the burden, will be greatly indebted to him. We owe much of our social happiness to well-directed efforts for the public good, untainted by personal motives, and it is always pleasing to have a fresh proof, like that given by Mr. Morewood, that there are men who, without any reference to private advantage, will boldly come forward and denounce social evils. Will he go further than this, and show, not only what is to be done during the next six months, but also how the Sewers Commissioners, or any other public authority, can be enabled so to deal with sullage—the property of the public—as to make it yield the greatest amount of pecuniary profit to its owners? If he will do this, with that unselfish patriotism which is so evident in his letter to the Lord Mayor, he will well deserve the thanks of the ratepayers of the metropolis. I am, Sir, &c.,

N. R.

London, March 27.

WORKS AND WORKMEN IN FRANCE.

THE labour question in France is indeed a question of labour; what may come of it, it is impossible to say yet. Impracticable, absurd notions have been put into the heads of the working classes, and expectations have been raised which cannot be fulfilled. The reduction of the day's work to 10 hours has not satisfied, and the men have been striking in various parts of Paris, with the view of further reducing it to nine hours. *Le Corsaire* typifies the state of things by saying that musicians demand that the quadrille shall finish at the *pastourelle*, and the bootmakers have determined that they will make only one boot instead of a pair.—The decree suppressing middle men—small contractors—not being generally obeyed, the offence is now made punishable by fines of 50*fr.*, 100*fr.*, and 200*fr.* for a repetition of the offence, and imprisonment from one month to six if the practice is persisted in.—The *Moniteur des Architectes*, at the risk of popularity, has a sensible and able article against this and the absurd attempt to put all workmen on an equal footing.—As an experiment of the associative principle, four "social workshops" are to be formed in four districts of Paris, each to contain 400 families. The expense of erecting them will amount to 40,000*fr.*, to be raised by loan, secured by mortgage on the premises, and paid out of the lodging money. These workshops will contain reading-rooms, infirmaries, schools, courts, gardens, baths. It is expected that the advantages gained by living together, as far as their food is concerned, will be equivalent to a rise in wages. None but married men are to be admitted. To this there can be no objection. But so much having been promised, this will not satisfy.—Gratuitous theatrical exhibitions are to be given to the working classes. In the preamble of the decree the minister says, that "if the state owes to the people the labour which enables them to live, it ought also to encourage all attempts calculated to make them participate in the moral amusements which elevate the heart," and that "performances of the *chefs d'œuvre* of the French theatre must needs develop good and noble sentiments."

* See p. 159, ante.